

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1–33 and 63 are pending in the application. Claims 1–12 and 14–33 are rejected. Claim 63 is allowed. Claim 13 is objected to. In this Amendment and Response, claim 1 is amended, and claims 13 and 63 are canceled.

I. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1–12 and 14–33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knapp et al. WO 98/45481 in view of Yon-Hin et al. US 6,440,645 and, as to claim 7, further in view of Pourahmadi et al. US 6,440,645; as to claim 12, further in view of Matsudaira et al. US 4,448,493; as to claims 15 and 16, further in view of Norman et al. US 6,329,357; as to claims 17 and 18, further in view of Beers et al. US 5,508,273.

In response, Applicants have amended the single independent claim, claim 1, to include the limitations of claim 13, which was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and any intervening claims, of which there are none. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 as being unpatentable over Knapp et al. WO 98/45481 in view of Yon-Hin et al. US 6,440,645 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

As this amendment caused claim 1 to be identical to allowed claim 63, the now redundant claim 63 has been canceled. Claim 13 has been canceled because it has been subsumed by amended claim 1.

Claims 2–12 and 14–33 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as set forth herein with respect to amended claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of these dependent claims is respectfully requested.

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Theo T. Nikiforov, et al.
Reply to Final Office Action of September 8, 2005

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann C. Petersen
Reg. No. 55,536

CALIPER LIFE SCIENCES, INC.
605 Fairchild Drive
Mountain View, CA 94043
Direct: 650-623-0667
Fax: 650-623-0504
ann.petersen@caliperLS.com

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Signed: _____

